

Cabinet Meeting Resolution

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

E2563

WoE Partnership bid for designation as a Better Bus Area

Date of Meeting	12-Jun-13
The Issue	<i>A joint bid to the Department for Transport by the West of England Partnership authorities for designation of a network of key bus service corridors as a Better Bus Area</i>
The decision	<p>(1) To AGREE that a bid should be submitted to the Department for Transport for designation of a network of key bus service corridors in Bath & North East Somerset as part of a Better Bus Area in conjunction with other West of England Partnership authorities and local bus operators; and</p> <p>(2) To DELEGATE authority to the Divisional Director for Planning & Transport Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, to approve the final details of the bid.</p>
Rationale for decision	<p>This is an opportunity to build on the impressive track record of the West of England Partnership authorities in obtaining funding from government for transport improvements. In recent years, successful bids have been submitted for the Greater Bristol Bus Network, Bath Transportation Package, Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Better Bus Area Fund (2012) and Green Bus Fund.</p> <p>If this opportunity to bid for Better Bus Area designation is not taken, the money currently paid by government through BSOG to support bus services might be lost to the industry if BSOG is abolished. In that event, operators may seek to replace that portion of their income by increasing fares or reducing costs through withdrawal of weaker services. Some small operators may withdraw from the market altogether.</p> <p>In a Better Bus Area, the effect of the devolution of funding will be to re-direct it away from a direct subsidy to bus operators into provision of measures that will increase bus ridership and/or reduce operating costs. This is a more sustainable way of using that funding and the Better Bus Area designation will draw in additional funding in the form of the top-up payments.</p> <p>The Council has developed very good partnership working with local bus operators and this is an opportunity to develop that relationship further.</p>
Other options considered	A bid based on a geographical area, such as the Bath urban area or the whole West of England Partnership area, was considered but not supported by bus operators.
Declarations of Interest	None

The Decision is subject to Call-In within 5 working days of publication of the decision